

Section 1

INTRODUCTION

Vision, Mission and Values

Bloomington's vision, mission and values statements guide the City's comprehensive planning efforts. These statements were prepared as part of the *Imagine Bloomington 2025* strategic planning and budgeting process conducted by the Bloomington City Council in 2006 to 2008.

The *Imagine Bloomington 2025* vision and mission draw inspiration from the City's 150-year history, its can-do spirit, the talents and experience of residents and businesses and a shared belief that anything worth doing is worth doing well. Bloomington's core values inform Bloomington's vision for the future.

Values

Bloomington is a community that people seek out as a place to live, conduct business and recreate. We have achieved this status by creating vibrant, safe, welcoming neighborhoods and by working together with our neighbors to promote the fun and vitality of community life.

- **We choose to shape the future** rather than reacting to a changing environment.
- **We provide our children** with the educational opportunities to succeed and lead Bloomington into the future;
- **We support the efforts of our business community**, ensuring the availability of quality jobs, goods and services.
- **We are stewards** of our environment, promoting sustainability of our many resources and the creation of inviting public spaces.
- **We strive to preserve and enhance** neighborhood vitality while promoting a strong balanced local economy.



City of Bloomington Organizational Mission Statement

"A professional, productive, learning organization that builds and renews the community by providing quality services at an affordable price."





The Federal-style brick Gideon Pond House was built in 1856.

Community Overview

Bloomington, Minnesota, is a 38 square mile community located along the Minnesota River in the southwestern portion of the Twin Cities metropolitan area. The city is fully developed and designated as a “Developed Area” by the Metropolitan Council. Bloomington will continue to grow through redevelopment (see **Table 1.1**, below right). In 2008, Bloomington was home to approximately 86,000 residents and close to 100,000 jobs. There are nearly two jobs for each Bloomington resident in the work force.

Land use is well balanced among residential, natural, commercial, and industrial uses. Almost a third of the city has been preserved for conservation, public and recreation uses. Looking forward, the city is well positioned to continue to thrive and be a municipal leader. Bloomington’s central location in a robust metropolitan area and its proximity to major transportation resources, such as freeways, light rail transit and the international airport, are immense assets.

Community Vision

To build and renew the community by providing services, promoting renewal and guiding growth in an even more sustainable, fiscally sound manner.

Bloomington’s vision of success is centered on its people, neighborhoods, businesses and government.

Our People are:

- *Active:* We participate in community life.
- *Cooperative:* We help and support each other for the benefit of all.
- *Respectful:* We hold our people and our institutions in high regard.
- *Healthy:* We support actions that promote our physical and emotional well-being.

Our Neighborhoods are:

- *Safe:* Our personal safety is our highest priority.
- *Welcoming:* We are friendly and open to all that live and work here.
- *Enjoyable:* We have high quality recreation and open spaces available to all.
- *Diverse:* A variety of living options are available to all.

Our Businesses:

- Provide an important foundation for building community.
- Supply good jobs: We have many high quality employment opportunities available.
- Provide a variety of goods and services: Convenient and plentiful goods and services are available.
- Are active partners in community: Our businesses are engaged in civic life.

Our Government:

- Is a reflection of our community’s aspirations.
- Spends tax revenues wisely: We invest our resources prudently for the benefit of all.
- Encourages public participation: We ask our citizens for their opinions and their help.
- Anticipates and adapts to challenges and opportunities: We plan for the future and take action.
- Maintains and preserves public assets: We protect our environmental resources and maintain quality public facilities.

Table 1.1 Household, Population and Employment Forecasts

Year	Households	Population	Employment
2010	37,141	86,187	108,118
2020	39,371	90,542	124,700
2030	40,536	92,477	135,214

Sustainability

Bloomington's vision recognizes that the City needs to grow and operate in a sustainable manner that meets the needs of today without reducing the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. The *Comprehensive Plan*, as well as the district plans, the *Parks Master Plan*, the *Alternative Transportation Plan*, the *Comprehensive Surface Water Management Plan*, the *Water System Master Plan*, the *Water Emergency and Conservation Plan*, and the *Sanitary Sewer Policy Plan*, are the implementation tools of the City's vision and mission. In each of these plans, sustainability is a core value and goal. In this *Comprehensive Plan*, Bloomington's commitment to sustainability is not a stand alone element but rather a philosophy woven through all of the elements.

Today, the City believes that becoming a more sustainable city will be a significant theme for the next decade. Sustainable strategies will address energy use, accessibility, green infrastructure, choice of housing and transportation options and emphasis on using local and regional resources. This process will involve moving beyond suburban development patterns to offering urban densities, a mix of uses and a quality transit system.

Examples of key goals and strategies from the various elements that will contribute to a sustainable future include:

Land Use

- Focus most of the commercial and residential growth in three mixed use areas (Airport South, Penn/American, and Normandale Lake) where it can be served by transit, encourage short trip lengths, promote biking and walking and reduce vehicle miles traveled.

Transportation

- Support transit improvements including additional transit service in the I-494, American Boulevard, I-35W and TH 77 corridors.
- Implement the *Alternative Transportation Plan* including the creation of bikeway and walkway networks and their interfaces with transit and various commercial and recreational destinations.
- Operate a Pavement Management Plan to adequately renew the transportation infrastructure.
- Encourage shared parking among developments.

Housing

- Guide new high density housing toward locations near transit, services, amenities and employment.
- Encourage higher densities where appropriate as redevelopment occurs.

Development History

Native Americans traveled, settled, and traded along the Minnesota River for centuries. The river also brought occasional European explorers and traders. In the 1820s, Fort Snelling became the first European settlement at the nearby confluence of the Minnesota and Mississippi Rivers. With the fort nearby, some of the earliest settlers in Bloomington were missionaries who came to convert the resident Native Americans. In the 1850s, Bloomington began to be settled by Europeans and converted to agricultural uses. The city was incorporated in 1858 but remained primarily agricultural for another century, raising produce for the growing nearby cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul.

In the 1950s, Bloomington became the classic American "boom town" and its population soared from 9,900 in 1950 to 50,500 in 1960. The city's central location in the metropolitan area, proximity to freeways, and proximity to a major international hub airport resulted in a strong and diverse economy with a mix of commerce and industry. Today, Bloomington is an "Edge City", an important economic engine for Minnesota and a major tourist destination for the Upper Midwest.

As it looks to a more sustainable future, Bloomington intends to provide a range of land use and transportation options moving beyond an "Edge City" to become a more complete, sustainable city.



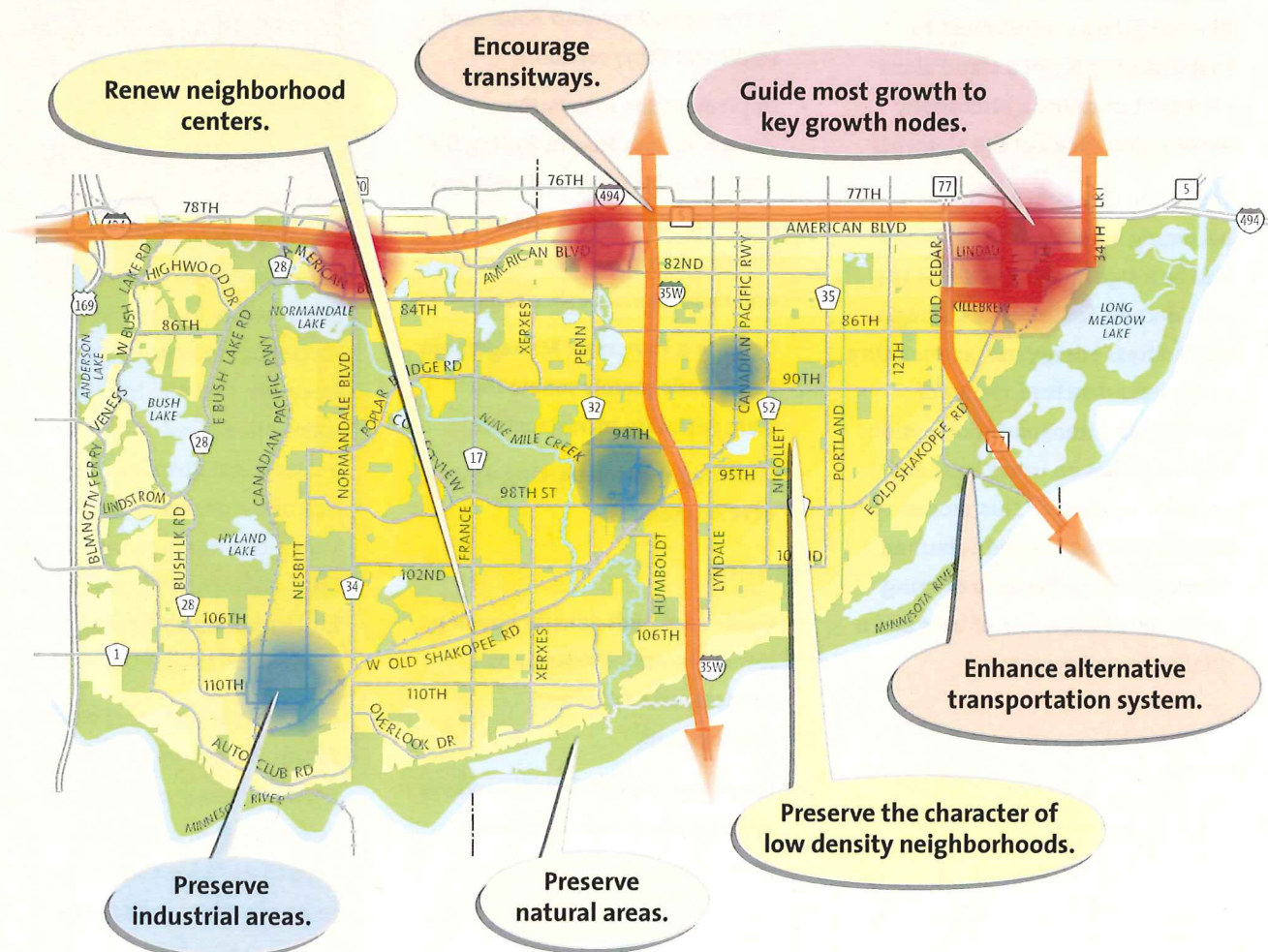
Utilities

- Reduce energy and resource consumption by decreasing inflow and infiltration into the sanitary system and by encouraging water conservation.
- Protect water quality through management programs for surface and subsurface water.
- Adopt an asset management program to preserve the excellent condition of Bloomington's utilities

Organizational Strength

- Maintain a strong, sustainable organization in terms of the quality and affordability of services, financial strength and the professionalism and productivity of its operations.
- Make community investments that in turn encourage private investments consistent with the City's sustainability objectives.

Figure 1.1 Strategic Directions



Source: Bloomington Planning Division, 2008.

Table 1.2 Top 10 Ranked Goals – Strategic Planning Open Houses

Rank	Goal
1	Promote and/or provide enhanced alternative transportation options.
2	Be a family friendly community.
3	Maintain and enhance City park and recreational assets.
4	Preserve and maintain our natural resources for ourselves and future generations.
5	Maximize desirability of residential and commercial areas.
6	Enhance support for members of the community as they age.
7	Create a community where residents and visitors are safe.
8	Optimize enrollment at Bloomington schools to ensure healthy class size and revenue.
9	Help all public and private Bloomington schools succeed.
10	Increase use of sustainable practices.

Source: Bloomington Port Authority.

Comprehensive Plan Foundation – Public Input

The goals and strategies of the *Comprehensive Plan* are guided by the significant public input gathered during the *Imagine Bloomington 2025* strategic planning process. The strategic planning process included the following public participation components:

- In the summer of 2006, Bloomington officials met with community strategic partners to gather preliminary input. Strategic partners included the Bloomington Athletic Association, the Bloomington Chamber of Commerce, the Bloomington Convention and Visitors Bureau, the Bloomington Fine Arts Council, the Bloomington Historical Society, Bloomington Public Schools, Bloomington Rotary Clubs, Bridging Inc., Cornerstone, Normandale Community College, Northwestern Health Sciences

University and Volunteers Enlisted to Assist People (VEAP).

- In the fall of 2006, four town hall meetings were held to gather input on the proposed community vision and values statement.
- An on-line survey was completed in the fall of 2006 that generated 516 responses. Input gathered from the survey was consistent with the input at the open houses.
- In the fall of 2006, several focus group meetings were held to gather additional strategic input from specific groups. Focus groups included seniors, senior service providers, leaders in multi-cultural communities, major business leaders, hospitality industry employees, environmentalists, faith community leaders and high school students.

Role of the Comprehensive Plan

First and foremost, the *Comprehensive Plan* is a compilation of the City of Bloomington's goals and strategies. The plan expresses where the city is today and where it desires to be in the future, with recommendations on actions needed to reach future goals. As such, the plan is a guide to decision making and a foundation for more detailed planning efforts. The plan is implemented through the *City Code*, Community Investment Program, annual budget, smaller scale plans, day-to-day operations, and through the efforts and resources of private citizens, businesses, and organizations.

In Minnesota, the *Comprehensive Plan* is also a legal document that satisfies numerous statutory requirements. The plan must be approved by the Metropolitan Council and must be consistent with adopted regional plans. The plan also serves as a good general introduction to municipal issues for a new resident, staff member, commissioner, or City Councilmember.

The *Comprehensive Plan* is not a fixed document, but rather part of an ongoing planning and implementation process. Because conditions and circumstances are constantly changing, plans must continuously be reevaluated and adjusted.

- Approximately 335 people participated in multiple open houses during the summer of 2007. The open houses included an exercise in which attendees used dots and stars to select their most important strategic goals. **Table 1.2, page 1.5,** lists the top ten ranked goals from the open houses.
- In 2007, input was gathered from resident volunteers on Bloomington's advisory commissions and from the Bloomington Chamber of Commerce Board.

Significant additional public input gathered through open houses, surveys, focus groups and committees has guided other aspects of Bloomington's strategic planning and these inform the Comprehensive

Plan. These plans include the *Parks Master Plan*, the *Alternative Transportation Plan*, the *Comprehensive Surface Water Management Plan*, the district plans, the *Water System Master Plan*, the *Water Emergency and Conservation Plan*, and the *Sanitary Sewer Policy Plan*. Strategic initiatives in all these plans, including the *Comprehensive Plan*, will be implemented by a partnership of public and private investment. The City's investments are identified in the City's Five-Year Capital Investment Program.



Looking west over the Minnesota River bluffs, the busy I-494 separates Bloomington's Airport South District from the MSP Airport to the north.